V. BEYOND BYZANTINES AND OTTOMANS : 4

ON THE ALLEGED "DESTRUCTION" OF THE GREAT HORDE IN 1502

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"May Allah preserve us from evil-doers"

Great Khan Mengli Giray

It is commonly supposed that a considerable state in Europe called the Great Horde, or Golden Horde,[1] was destroyed in the year 1502. The Great Horde is thought to have been destroyed by the forces of a

[1] This state was not called by Tatars "the Golden Horde". In 14th- and 15th-century Russian chronicles and documents it was frequently called the "Large Horde", the "Great" or "Grand Horde" ("Bol'shaya orda", "Velikaya orda") – "this year [1398] Emperor Toktamysh of the Great Horde [Bolshia ordy] sent ambassadors...": *Nikonovskaya letopis'*, cited in B.D.Grekov and A.Yu.Yakubovsky, *Zolotaya orda i yeyo padeniye* (Moscow-Leningrand, 1950), 381; "you must write to me whatever news comes there about the Great Horde": Ivan III of Moscow to Semyon Borisovich in the Crimea, June 1486 (printed in G.F.Karpov, ed. *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snosheniy Moskovskogo gosudarstva s Krymskoyu i Nogayskoyu ordami i s Turtsiyey*, I: *s 1474 po 1505 god. Epokha sverzheniya mongol'skogo iga v Rossii* [hereafter: Karpov, PsMK, I], Sbornik Imperatorskogo russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva, XLI (Saint Petersburg, 1884), 53). Almost all the diplomatic records of Muscovite relations with the Great Horde prior to 1502 have been lost and the printed Polish-Lithuanian records of relations with the Great Horde lack the Great Khans' titles. These is no doubt however that the above-mentioned Russian forms are accurate translations of the Tatar terminology: state documents issued in and after 1502 reveal this. (See the document quoted in Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* [Stanford, 1978], 18, and compare it with the documents, cited below in notes 27-29.) Before 1502 Mengli Giray, khan in the Crimea and apparently a dispossessed Great Horde Khan, referred to the Great Horde as "the Horde": "then the Horde will not have moved against me": Mengli Giray to Ivan III of Moscow, 5 September, 1500 (Karpov, *op.cit.*, 330) Another expression used by Tatars to denote this state and its government was "Great Ulus" ("Great People") which was sometimes translated into medieval Russian as "*belaya orda*" ("White Horde") as is revealed by a comparison of an original Tatar document with its original

certain Mengli Giray. (Mengli Giray, a descendant of the Mongol conquerer Chingiz Khan, is usually referred to as a ruler of the "Crimean Tatars".) When carrying out this annihilation Mengli Giray, it is alleged, was serving as the agent, or dupe of a Russian prince called Ivan. (Ivan III, sometimes called "the Great", was, in 1502, the Grand Prince of Moscow.)

Among the many writers who have dealt with this catastrophe and its meaning, one – the Soviet historian Konstantin Bazilevich – penned this brief and nutty passage which I present here to persuade the general reader that I am not making this up: "[after 1480] Ivan III with great skill directed the activities of Mengli Giray towards the destruction of his most evil enemy. The destruction of the Great Horde was a great triumph of Muscovite foreign policy".[2] Verbum oris est verbum mentis.

There is no evidence that the Great Horde was destroyed in 1502 other than the statements by historians that it was.

How is this to be explained? It cannot be explained by reference to

Russian *resumé*: M.A.Obolensky, *Yarlyk khana zolotoy ordy Tokhtamysha k polskomu korolyu Yagaylu 1392-1393 goda* (Kazan, 1850) 22, 66. – The best Russian translation of the Tatar original is to be found in V.Radlov, "Yarlyki Tokhtamysha i Temur Kutluka" (*Zapiski Vostochnogo otdela imperatorskogo russkogo arkheologicheskogo obshchestva,* III, *1888 g.* (Saint Petersburg, 1889) where "*Uluk ulusnun turushunga*" translated "for the well-being of the great people" (*ibid.*, 15). Sometimes this expression was put into medieval Russian as "*Velikiy ulus*" ("Great Ulus"): "Prince Achika of the Great Ulus to Grand Prince Vasiliy", "From Babashikh of the Great Ulus to the Grand Prince Vasiliy". – These letters, of July 1515 and September 1508 are printed in G.F.Karpov and G.F.Shtendman eds., *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snosheniy Moskovskogo gosudarstva s Krymom, Nagayami a Turtsiyeyu,* II. *1508-1521* (hereafter, Karpov, PsMK, II), Sbornik Imperatorskogo russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva, XCV (Saint Petersburg, 1895), 39, 172. See also the text of an instruction by the Great Khan Hadjdji Giray, written in 1453 and printed in A.N.Kurat, ed., *Topkapu Sarayi Muzesi Arsefindeki Altin Ordu Kirim ve Turkistan Hanlarina ait Yarlik ve Bitikler* (Istanbul, 1940), 65. Great care must be taken when we endeavour to comprehend the Russian usage of Great Horde ("*Bol'shaya orda*") in translations from the Tatar, because the encampment of *any* khan was also called "Great *ordu*". See, e.g., the letter of Mengli Giray the khan in the Crimea (of 17 June 1501) to Ivan III, which was "written at my Great ordu by Mare Waters": Karpov, PsMK, I, 362.

[2] K.V.Bazilevich, *Vneshnyaya politika russkogo tsentralizovannogo gosudarstva vtoraya polovina XV veka* (Moscow, 1952), 490.

the relevant documentary sources – the correspondence of knowledgable Tatars, Poles, Russians etc. in the early sixteenth century – because these abundant sources reveal that the Great Horde was not destroyed at all. Is it the case that historians know better than Ivan III and his sovereign contemporaries about the significant event of their respective reigns? This is a tempting line of enquiry: Ivan III did not know about the destruction of a dangerous state which neighboured his own and maintained diplomatic relations with it after 1502 – so did his heirs. But no one has criticised Ivan's shortsightedness. Is this due perhaps to a prejudice in favour of the man who engineered the destruction of the Horde (a prejudice which permits the blind citation of documents which show that he didn't)? Ivan's contemporary, Aleksandr, King of Poland, did not know about the destruction of the Great Horde either; he it was who informed the Pope in 1504 that the power of the ruler of the Great Horde had been augmented since 1502. Perhaps there has been a mistake. An oversight. But, could clerical error alone have caused a decent veil to be drawn before the meaning of historical documents long in print? The circumstances of the Great Horde's disappearance have apparently warranted no historical enquiry in the past 200 years. Could this be because the affairs of the Great Horde, the mature concerns of its Tatars, their real world, are not material for proper history, except when the rag-bag of facts or fictions known about them can be pillaged to explain or ornament the history of states that mattered more? Does the critical reception by students and writers in the last 200 years of the news about the "end" of the Horde signify a mute recognition that its sacrifice was a millenial gesture, made to provide a conclusion, with prejudice, to a period in Russian history?

Ivan and Aleksandr were not themselves without prejudice towards the Tatars. That they regarded them as an infernal nuisance is well-known (and documented). From the time of the notorious "Mongol conquests" in eastern Europe during the 13th century the forbears of Ivan and Aleksandr had to put up with what Buonacorsi (Aleksandr's tutor) called those "imbecile" Tatars (an attitude characteristic of Christians of that time towards Muslim states which did *not* appear likely to conquer the world). But they did not ignore them. We do. Why?

The general reader will, it is hoped, be equipped to attempt answers to these questions if he peruses the following passages, which contain brief accounts of (i) how the Great Horde became detached from history; (ii) what the Great Horde was; and (iii) what happened to it in 1502.

* * * * * * * * *

In 1480 there unfolded the story of the collapse of Tatar authority over the lands of north-east Russia. In that year Grand Prince Ivan III refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Great Khan of the Great Horde. Now this khan was called Ahmed. He was a representative of a royal dynasty known to Tatars as the House of Namagan. In the summer of 1480 Ahmed approached the Muscovite frontier on the understanding that he would be joined by the forces of his ally Kazimierz, who was the King of Poland and Grand Prince of Lithuania. Towards the beginning of winter Ahmed withdrew from the Muscovite frontier, defied by his erstwhile vassal Ivan, betrayed by his erstwhile ally[3] Kazimierz. One of Ahmed's sons devoted several succinct passages to this affair in letters to one of Kazimierz's sons, e.g., "My father Ahmed and your father the king were united in brotherhood. For the sake of that brotherhood they swore an oath... My father Ahmed kept his word, but your father the king did not appear at the appointed time"; "My father mounted his horse, yours did not"; "My father's knights and princes said 'Ivan is your dependent and the king's, but the king has not come on campaign with you this year and you should return.' Then they took my father's bridle and turned back."[4] Russia's historians are persuaded that the year 1480 marks the end of an era, the age of the 'Tatar yoke" in Russian history – that is to say, the period in which the Tatar khans of the Great Horde proved able, on the whole, to ensure that their neighbours, the rulers

[3] During the khan's retreat some of his people raided territory subject to Kazimierz: *ibid.*, 160.

[4] These quotations are drawn from the records of the diplomatic relations between the Great Horde and Poland/Lithuania printed in K.Pulaski, ed., *Stosunki z Mendli-Girejem Chanom tatarow perekopskich (1469-1515). Akta i listy* (hereafter, Pulaski, Akta) (Krakow-Warsaw, 1881), 238, 240, 248.

of the Russian principalities, remained their reliable friends and tributaries.

The year 1480 is celebrated also in accounts of Tatar history. Why so? The Tatar state known as the Great Horde or Golden Horde was one of the most powerful states in Europe during the late middle ages and the circumstances of its creation and its history during the period of its greatest power have not been ignored by historians. However, few of those historians have been Tatars. In the main they have been either native Russians or amateurs of Russian history from many lands. The interest of most historians in the Great Horde grew out of their need to understand better Russian affairs during the period of the "Tatar yoke" – a period which began in the mid-thirteenth century when Batu (a grandson of the Mongol conquerer Chingiz Khan) mastered several civilised states in eastern Europe as well as numerous nomadic lordships in the east European steppe. Subsequently, the princes in the Russian lands were subject to the government of a state established by Batu in the east European steppe (although their tribute payments, according to a fourteenth-century observer, were divided between four khans (perhaps between the heirs of Batu and the heirs of Batu's brothers, at least two of whom received patrimonies in eastern Europe).[5] The historiography of Batu's state is dominated by four books, two in Russian, two in German. Three of these cover its history from the mid-thirteenth century to 1480; one takes its history as far as 1502. The two Russian books devoted to the history of this "Golden Horde" – I repeat, from its creation to 1480 – are interestingly entitled "The collapse of the Golden Horde"[6] and "The Golden Horde and its Fall".[7] The German works are called "A History of the Golden Horde in the east European steppe, that is, the Mongols in Russia" and "The Golden Horde. The Mongols in Russia".[8]

[5] Mufadel ibn Abi'l Fada'il. See V.V.Bartol'd, "Dvenadtsat' lektsii po istorii turetskikh narodov sredney Azii" printed in V.V.Bartol'd, *Sochineniya,* V (Moscow, 1968) 139.

[6] M.Safargaliyev, *Raspad Zolotoy ordy* (Saransk, 1960).

[7] Grekov and Yakubovsky, *op.cit.*

[8] J. von Hammer Purgstall, *Geschichte der Goldenen Horde in Kiptschak, das ist, der Mongolen in Russland* (Pesth-Vienna, 1840); B.Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde. Die Mongolen in Russland, 1223-1502* (Leipzig, 1943).

Naturally, if the overriding interest in the story of the Great Horde or Golden Horde is the Russian interest, then the history of that state after 1480 cannot have much attraction for historians of Russia. Indeed, its history apparently loses much of its appeal at the end of the fourteenth century. Its affairs in the fifteenth century were quite complicated: the Great Horde was sometimes subdivided and there were many changes in its government (and occasionally in its several governments). Its story in this period cannot be told in a few pages. Few, alas! are the pages accorded to the history of the Great Horde "in Russia" or even "outside Russia" in the period of its "fall". (A.Yakubovsky, for example, in a 428-page study, gives to the history of the Great Horde between 1410 and 1480 23 pages; of these about ten concern the Great Horde.)[9] This may partly be due to the circumstance that, while the "suzerain" Great Horde was experiencing a "time of troubles" from the late fourteenth century to 1502, one of its vassal states was enjoying a period of rapid growth. The story of the rise of Moscow is well-documented and is apparently smooth and easy to understand, while the affairs of the Great Horde in this period (and also of the Tatar lordships established about its periphery) appear to have been chaotic. Accounts of the Great Horde in the fifteenth century are unsatisfactory and provide few answers or no answers at all to questions concerning the nature of the Great Horde, its location in any given season (*sic*), the identity and interests of its rulers and its "ruling circles", the power-bases of those who sought to rule it, etc. How different is the history of Muscovy in this period, in which the "who?", the "where?" and the "what?" present few problems to the student and scholar!

In consequence, the story of the repudiation by Ivan III of the suzerainty of the Great Khan in 1480 has little impact upon the general reader, thoroughly persuaded that the suzerain power was then in chronic decline, and who is perhaps even puzzled that this repudiation was so long delayed: for had not one hundred years elapsed since the Muscovite Prince Dimitriy of the Don had administered a severe lesson to the then ruler of the Great Horde, Mamay of the princely House of Kiat? (That is another event, celebrated in Russian history

[9] Grekov and Yakubovsky, *op.cit.*, 406-28.

and in histories of the Tatars, into which we have no present need to inquire.)

Those who teach or write about Russian history may have observed with what small surprise students and readers accept also the news that the Great Horde vanished before the end of the reign of Ivan III, in circumstances almost as sudden and dramatic as those attending the creation of the Great Horde. Could it be that we are captivated by the romance of the guileful Ivan III prompting his "faithful" Tatar ally, Mengli Giray, down in the Crimea, to annihilate the Great Horde? Are we perhaps consumed with emotions born out of a sense of poetic justice? (For is it not "just" that the presumed end to the Pharaonic role in Russian history of the Great Horde – an end celebrated in the historiography of Ivan III's activities in 1480 – should have been capped, so soon after [in 1502] by the extinction of the Pharaohs themselves and all their works?) Do we think it apt that the "agent" of this catastrophe should have been a Tartarian, blood-kin to ancient Batu? Why do we not ask "who says so?" and inquire why the historiography of the Great Horde after 1502 is as bare as the historiography of the heirs of Ozymandias?

The answer to the question "who says so?" is "practically everybody". Student note-takers in the early nineteenth century perhaps singled out as an aide-memoire a short passage from a volume of Russian history by Nikolay Karamzin (published in 1817) to the effect that in June 1502 the Crimean khan informed Ivan III of Moscow that "the ancient Great Horde no longer exists".[10] For sure, since 1817 the Great Horde has been comprehensively "vanquished",[11] "annihilated",[12] "crushed",[13] "utterly routed"[14] etc. by generations of histo-

[10] N.Karamzin, *Istoriya gosudarstva rossiyskogo,* VI (Saint Petersburg, 1817), 293.
[11] E.g., "in 1503 the Great Horde was finally beaten... it was vanquished by Crimea and Muscovy": B.Spuler, "Batuids" in H.A.R.Gibb et al., eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* I (The Hague, 1960), 1108.
[12] E.g., "Mengli Giray's warriors annihilated the army of Shaikh Ahmed who with a few followers managed to escape": I.Grey, *Ivan III and the Unification of Russia* (London, 1964), 130; "in 1502 the sons of Shmed were finally beaten and the Great Horde destroyed": A.N.Nasonov, L.V.Cherepnin, A.A.Zimin, eds., *Ocherki istorii SSSR. Period feodalizma, konets XV veka-nachalo XVII veka* (Moscow, 1955), 155.
[13] E.g., "Mengli Giray's attention was distracted by the Golden Horde (which he crushed in 1502)": George Vernadsky, *Russia at the dawn of the Modern Age* (New

rians.

But, as I have already stated in my preamble, there is no evidence that the Great Horde in 1502 "fell under the blows of the Crimean Tatars";[15] there is no sound documentary basis for assertions about the Great Horde's "liquidation"[16] or to the effect that it "ceased to exist"[17] or was "wiped off the map".[18] Yet Solov'yov – author of the most influential multi-volume history of Russia – put his seal on this notion, while Vel'yaminov-Zernov – unquestionably the most able and careful or all the historians of the Tatars – in Europe – wrote: "the Horde never rose again and its very name disappeared".[19]

What was the literary origin of these post-Karamzin variations or substitutes for thought dressed out as summations of critical analysis? Historians rarely cite sources to substantiate generally accepted truths,

Haven-London, 1959), 94.

[14] E.g., "The relics of the Golden Horde were utterly routed by the Crimean Tartars, only Shaikh Ahmed and a handful of men managed to escape": John Fennel, *Ivan the Great of Moscow* (London, 1961), 247.

[15] E.g., "around 1500 the Horde itself fell under the blows of the Crimean Tartars": N.Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia* (New York-London, 1963), 117.

[16] *sic.* I.B.Grekov, *Ocherki po istorii mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy vostochnoy Yevropy, XIV-XVI vv* (Moscow, 1963), 233.

[17] "[after 1480] the Horde never recovered even the semblance of its previous condition and ceased to exist twenty years later": V.D.Nazarov, "Konets zolotoordynskogo iga" (*Voprosy istorii,* X, Moscow, October 1980), 120; "La Horde d'Or cessa ainsi d'exister depuis 1502": C.Stählin, *La Russia des origines à la naissance de Pierre le Grand* (Paris, 1946), 167; "in 1502 the Crimean Khan Mengli Giray delivered the final blow to the Golden Horde and ended its existence": S.G.Pushkarev, *Obzor russkoy istorii* (New York, 1953), 139.

[18] E.g., "The final blow to Russia's secular enemy was dealt in 1502 by the Crimean Tartars, who defeated the Golden Horde and wiped it off the map": M.Florinsky, *Russia: a History and an Interpretation,* I (New York, 1961), 64; "such was the end of the Golden Horde. It was swallowed up by Russia in 1502": S.Lane Poole, *Musulmanskiye dinastii* (Saint Petersburg, 1899), 190, and the translator's note (V.V.Bartol'd): "as is well known, the... khanate was destroyed by the Crimeans, allies of the Russians, but this fact did not entail the territorial enlargement of Russia" (*ibid.*, 190, note 2).

[19] "Mengli Giray resolved this matter in 1502, falling upon Shaikh Ahmed and dealing his Horde the final heavy blow... Thus ended the existence of the famous Golden Horde": S.M.Solov'yov, *Istoriya Rossii s drevneyshikh vremyon,* III (reprinted Moscow, 1960), 87; "the Horde never arose again...": V.V.Vel'yaminov-Zernov, *Izsledovaniye o Kasimovskikh tsaryakh i tsarevichakh,* I (Saint Petersburg, 1864), 119, 248.

but Vel'yaminov-Zernov always did. In this instance he cited Karamzin.

But Karamzin never wrote that the Horde's "very name disappeared";[20] nor did Mengli Giray ever inform Ivan III that "the ancient Great Horde no longer exists".

It is not unusual for the "end" of the Great Horde to be linked with a yarn about the destruction of its "capital city". It is generally accepted that the Great Horde at the beginning of the sixteenth century possessed a capital called Saray situated somewhere on the river Volga and that this "city" was – as I.B.Grekov has written – "finally destroyed in 1502".[21] But – at the risk of boring the reader – I am obliged to say that there is no evidence that the Great Horde had a capital city called Saray, situated on the Volga, in 1502. Nevertheless, its "destruction" in that year, by the Crimean Khan Mengli Giray (who else?), about which there is no proof whatsoever, seems to be regarded as a particularly important aspect of the aforementioned "liquidation" of the Great Horde. Halil Inalcik, for example, has written: "Mengli Giray destroyed Saray in 1502, thereby striking a mortal blow at the Golden Horde". Lemercier-Quelquejay ("in 1502 when Mengli Giray struck a mortal blow at the Horde by destroying its capital Saray") and others concur.[22]

Documents from Moscow's Crimean archive (printed in 1884) reveal that Mengli Giray could not have journeyed to the Volga in 1502 or even have sent an army there to destroy, or even "partially"[23] to destroy Saray-by-Volga. It appears indeed, that the only time when the khan could have entertained seriously the notion of visiting the banks of the Volga in 1502 to search for the fabulous capital of the Great Horde was between August and September. But he was then ill, perhaps from the effects of some hard riding done earlier that year, for

[20] Karamzin did not quote from Mengli Giray's letter, he simply gave his *opinion* of its contents.

[21] I.B.Grekov, *op.cit.*, 150.

[22] H.Inalcık, "Kırım hanlığı" printed in *Islam Ansiklopedisi,* VI (Istanbul, 1954), 747: C.Lemercier-Quelquejay, "Les khanats de Kazan et de Crimée face à Moscovie en 1521," *Cahiers du monde russe et sovietique,* XII – 4 (La Haye, 1971), 483.

[23] "Mengli Giray... personally led an army against the Golden Horde and entered and partially destroyed its capital of Saray": Fisher, *op.cit.*, 15.

he claimed in a letter written to the Grand Prince of Moscow (Ivan) that he was at that time suffering from a disability which prevented him from mounting his horse![24] Furthermore, as he revealed in other letters sent to Moscow from various places in the Crimea – from Saray (*sic*), Ap Chetyrlyk etc – he had felt obliged to keep his armed forces close to the Crimean peninsula in the same period.[25]

But, to return to the less infantile problem of the destruction of the Great Horde (whose "very name disappeared" in 1502): historians interested in the international relations of eastern Europe in the early-modern period – say, from 1502 to 1783 – will have been struck by an expression which occurs in almost all state documents emanating from the court of the khans of the "Crimean Tatars" or directed thither from the chanceries of proper monarchs such as the kings of Poland and the Tsars of Russia. The expression in question is "the Great Horde".

If the Great Horde ceased to exist in June 1502 then why – we should inquire – did Mengli Giray, who is credited with its destruction, take the title "Great Khan of the Great Horde" in the summer of 1502, and why did he and his heirs (who ruled until 1783 a state called by historians the "Crimean Khanate") employ as their first title "Great Khan of the Great Horde"? Alan Fisher, in a recently published history of the Crimean Tatars, noting the use of this strange title by the Crimean khans, has suggested that it was for "internal consumption".[26] I am not sure what this means, unless it implies that the descendants of Chingiz Khan whose capital was situated in the Crimea from 1502 onwards were a vainglorious bunch, laying claim in a provincial, Crimean fashion to the inheritance of a vanished people-state. However, if we examine the available published diplomatic correspondence of states such as Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy we find that these governments actually addressed the Chingizid khans in the Crimea as Great Khans of the Great Horde. Here are one or two examples: Aleksandr, King of Poland and Grand Prince of Lithuania, addressed Mengli Giray in the summer or 1502 as "Great Khan of the

[24] Karpov, PsMK, I, 445. And read pages 417-52.
[25] *Ibid.*, 430-33, 444-45, and cf. 454, 462.
[26] Fisher, *op.cit.*, 18.

Great Horde" (this letter was first printed in 1783);[27] Ivan IV (the "Terrible") used the same address (in a letter printed in 1789),[28] while in 1681 a Russian ambassador from the court of Tsar Fyodor was instructed to travel to the Crimea "in the Great Horde" and to call Murad Giray "Khan Highness of the Great Horde" (this one was printed in 1848).[29]

Were the Polish and Russian monarchs pandering to the amusing vanity of petty Asiatic warlords? Were they happy to maintain diplomatic relations with a non-existent state: or did they understand that the Great Horde was not destroyed but simply taken over in the *last round* of a dynastic struggle which had, since the late fourteenth century occupied, chiefly, three families descended from the brothers of Batu: the royal houses of Namagan, Shiban and Tuka Timur?

The object of the warring dynasties had been to possess the Great Horde, whose people generally nomadised between the rivers Dnieper and Volga. Its possession became the subject of dispute following upon the extinction of the House of Batu. The power bases of these families lay in family patrimonies established after the Batuid conquests. The great orientalist V.V.Bartol'd has noted how "in the empire founded by [Chingiz Khan] as in all nomad states, the principle remained in force that the empire belonged not to the ruler but to the ruling family, and that each member of this family had a right to [people], an estate and an income",[30] so we should not be surprised to learn from the Shibanid historian Khan Abu'l-Ghazi, that the family of Batu's brother Tuka Timur received the Crimea as a patrimony. While this family may also have possessed territories elsewhere (as Safargaliyev points out)[31] other sources appear to bear out Abu'l-Ghazi's claim. The names of some members of this House who lived in the

[27] M.M.Shcherbatov, *Istoriya rossiyskaya ot drevneyshikh vremyon* (Saint Petersburg, 1771-94) IV, part 3, 246-47.

[28] *Ibid.*, V, part 4, 47.

[29] N.Murzakevich, ed., "Stateynyy spisok... poslannika... k Murad Gireyu v 1681" (*Zapiski Odesskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostey*, II, Odessa, 1848) 568ff.

[30] V.V.Bartol'd, "Chingiz Khan" printed in V.V.Bartol'd, *Sochineniya* V, 627. Bartol'd is the master of Tatar history whose massive work, his *ordu*, still rolls bright and effortlessly through the skinny *uluses* of his joyless imitators.

[31] Safargaliyev, *op.cit.*, 54-55.

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries will be familiar to historians of eastern Europe, e.g., Budjak, Hadjibey, Bek Yaruk of Mankermen, Tulek Timur and his great-nephew Toktamish Khan, and Tash Timur Khan (great-grandfather of Mengli Giray). According to the author of a genealogical work compiled in 1426 for a son of Tamerlane,[32] the first Tuka Timurid to bear the title khan was Dervish Khan, of the seventh generation after Chingiz. (Toktamish Khan belonged to the eighth generation, Tash Timur Khan to the ninth. Perhaps this Dervish was the first of his House to rule part of the Great Horde for a brief space of time after 1359 (?).[33] On the basis of this genealogist's

[32] "Muizz al-ansab fi shadjarat salatin mogul". Excerpts from this work, and other Persian writings in Russian translation, put together by Baron V.G.Tizengauzen and most painstakingly reworked by A.A.Romaskevich and S.L.Volin, are printed in V.G.Tizengauzen (sost.), *Sbornik materialov otnosyashchikhsya k istorii Zolotoy ordy,* II (Moscow-Leningrad, 1941). Budjkak (Budjak) – 6th generation after Chingiz. Hadjdji Bey is an old name for Odessa. Two Tuka Timurids bore this name, one in the 6th and one in the 10th generation after Chingiz. There were two called Yaruk; one of them, the brother of Mengli and the grandson of Tulek Timur was attacked on the Dnieper by Tamerlane. Tulek Timur (6th generation after Chingiz) is mentioned in connection with an expedition sent against a Tatar rebel in the lower Dnieper area in 1299 or 1300 by the Great Khan Tokta. In Tokta's army, among the "khans and commanders of 10,000" was Tulek Timur (according to the contemporary Egyptian author Rukn ed-Din Baybars). Perhaps this was the same Tulek Timur, "governor" of the Crimea, whom Ibn Battuta met in the 1330s (?). See Tizengauzen, *op.cit., 59, 61, 121, 179.* For the Egyptian authorities mentioned above, see Tizengauzen, *Sbornik materialov, otnosyashchikhsya k istorii Zolotoy ordy,* I (Saint Petersburg, 1884), 113, 280.

[33] Two men called Dervish, of the house of Tuka Timur, are mentioned by the genealogist. Both, interestingly, belonged to the seventh generation after Chingiz (one being the son of Tulek Timur). According to Ibn Khaldun Toktamysh lived in the Great Horde as a child. Was Ibn Khaldun wrong, or did Toktamysh (8th generation after Chingiz, the grand-nephew of Tulek Timur and close relative of the latter's son Dervish Khan) and his immediate family seek refuge, like so many others, at the court of Chimtay Khan of the Uzbeks, when the throne-struggle in the Great Horde developed after 1359? Why did Tamerlane later give him so much assistance? Did his "age" among the descendants of Batu's brothers of his generation give him a strong claim to the Great Horde? See Tizengauzen, *op.cit.,* I, 406. (If the objection were to be raised "but Ibn Khaldun said Toktamysh was Berdibek's son, and he wasn't" then one could reply with the following quotation from a letter written by a Tatar noble to Vasili III of Moscow, which serves to explain Tatar conceptions of "age" and status through the terminology of the family: "Your grandfather Grand Prince Vasili [II] called my

materials we gather that Dervish Khan was the ancestor of such Great Khans of the Great Horde as Ulugh Muhammed (tenth generation after Chingiz), Hadjdji Giray (eleventh generation) and Mengli Giray (twelfth generation).

Representatives of the House of Shiban first came to rule part of the Great Horde for a brief period in the 1360s.[34] During the thirteenth century the House of Batu's brother Shiban had received some lands to the west of the Volga,[35] but most of its patrimony lay to the east of that river (and chiefly to the east of the river Yaik – which is now called the Ural river). However in the last decade of the fourteenth century – after the extinction of the House of Batu – much of this Shibanid territory was seized by Temir Kutluk, a representative of a dynasty called by Tatars the House of Namagan. From this power base the heirs of Timur Kutluk strove – in competition with the Tuka Timurids and Shibanids – to gain possession of the Great Horde. Concerning these interlopers the Shibanid Khan Ibak wrote to Ivan III in 1493: "Among the children of Chingiz my [fore]father Emperor Shiban's patrimony stood close to yours ... but since those times the Temir-Namagan patrimony has been created and now we [the Shibanids] are further away from you [but now] having come to the Volga I stand on my [fore]father's patrimony; seeking out the places of my [fore]father I am campaigning against the [descendants] of Temir Kutluk".[36]

It is not known from which of Batu's brothers the House of Namagan was derived. The Astrakhanid dynasty which ruled Bukhara in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was definitely descended from Temir Kutluk and its members understood that their more

father Kogush his son" (Karpov, PsMK, II, 39). The same Prince Agish Shirin, son of Kogush, explained how he came to be head of the house of Shirin as follows: "I am equal to the [grand]sons of Tekne [Tehinia Shirin]. Prince Dovletek [grandson of Tekne] was only four years older than I. Then Kovletek died and the Sovereign said "among the Shirins you are old and your reward has come" and made of poor me a Prince [to the exclusion of Dovletek's brothers]" *ibid.*, 40).

[34] Khan Arabshah and others.

[35] Shiban's grandson Tokday apparently had a wintering place south of the river Terek, in the north Caucasus: Tiengauzen, *op.cit.*, II, 55.

[36] PsMK, I, 189-99.

remote ancestor was a certain Tuka Timur. But which one? The Tuka Timur who was Batu's brother? The Tuka Timur who was the grandson of Batu's brother Orda Ichen? Or the one who was the latter's grandson? "Allah knows better" – as our genealogist wisely noted. But, for our purposes, it doesn't matter. Tatars called the khans Temir Kutluk and Ahmed khans of the Namagan patrimony,[37] because they were both descended from a man called Numkan or Namagan in this order (according to the afore-mentioned genealogist): Numkan, Kutluk-Timur, Timur, Timur Kutluk, Timur, Kuchuk Muhammed.[38] Ahmed of Namagan, who figured in the 1480 affair, was the son of Kuchuk Muhammed.

With the death of the Batuid Khan Berdibek, about 1359, the Great Horde was orphaned. The extinction of the House of Batu had catastrophic consequences for the Great Horde. Its throne changed hands many times in the next century and a half as Shibanids and (chiefly) representatives of the houses of Namagan and Tuka Timur took control of it – sometimes ruling the Great Horde and their family patrimony as well, sometimes (especially when the individual khan was not undisputed head of his own house and master of the family patrimony) ruling the Great Horde alone.

Not infrequently the Great Horde was itself divided in this period, sometimes between khans belonging to one house as in 1484 when Murteza of Namagan (son of Ahmed) informed the Grand Prince of Lithuania that the Horde then had two separate administrations, one headed by himself, the other by his brother Seyyid Ahmed (*sic*).[39] Sometimes the Horde was divided between khans of rival houses, as

[37] Concerning a Great Horde attack upon the Crimea in 1490 Mengli Giray wrote that the sons of Ahmed "under Seyyid Ahmed, Shaikh Ahmed and Achika [Mankit] as many as there are in the Namagan patrimony came and trampled our homes" while Prince Bakhtiar Shirin wrote to Vassili III "I have heard that you have given the Meshchera possession to a royal prince of the Namagan patrimony (Karpov, PsMK, I, 108? II, 251).

[38] Tizengauzen, *op.cit.*, 62. This Numkan or Namagan was not the same as the Numagan (fl. about 1277) who was a son of Kubilay Khan. There is a town Namagan in the province of Ferghana which is thought to have been founded in the 16th century. Was this area the seat of the ancient patrimony of Namagan?

[39] Pulaski, *Akta,* 210.

was the case in 1433 when the Russian princes paid tribute to the Tuka Timurid Seyyid Ahmed (a descendant of Toktamish) and to Kuchuk Muhammed of Namagan.[40]

Because too little space has been devoted to the history of the Great Horde in the fifteenth century historians appear effectively to have lost it in the 1440s only to find it again in the 1460s. Essentially there seem to be five reasons for this oversight. Firstly, the frequent dynastic changes in the government of the Great Horde are sometimes seen as concerning chiefly the history of the family habitat or patrimony of the successful contender for the throne of the Great Horde – as much as to say that the history of the Norman kings of Sicily is the history of Normandy. Secondly, sometimes the fate of a Great Khan who lost control of the Horde in a sudden turnabout is seen as concerning the fate of the state itself. (Or, with its last Norman king Sicily and the Sicilians ceased to exist.) Thirdly, the Great Horde is sometimes confounded with the habitat of its ruler (Sicily was Normandy). And vice-versa (Normandy was Sicily). Fourthly, there is a fashionable obsession with the creation of "daughter states" of the Great Horde "in decline", though something like these daughter states – the patrimonies had existed since the very creation of the Horde (Normandy was a daughter state of Sicily). Fifthly, confused by the funny names used by Muslims, historians sometimes allow the dead to walk and in the case of the Great Horde, to rule. (The raids carried out by the defunct Seyyid Ahmed – a Tuka Timurid – on the Musovite frontier in the 1460s are an interesting episode in the story of the rise of Moscow.)

Safargaliyev, for example, author of the most recent large study of the Horde, is convinced that the House of Namagan (based in its patrimony Astrakhan) possessed the Great Horde between 1440 and 1467. (It may be doubted whether this House possessed more than its patrimony in this period – a patrimony moreover which shrank then under the blows of infuriated Shibanids.)[41] Now the Great Horde of

[40] See Safargaliyev, *op.cit.*, 241 – he quotes from an original document printed in *Sobraniye gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogovorov*, I (Saint Petersburg, 1813), 108.

[41] The Shibanid Abu'l-Khayr heavily defeated Kuchuk Muhammed and his sons Ahmed, Mahmud, Djavak and Bashiak, see the resumé of a manuscript by Mas'ud in B.A.Akhmedov: *Gosudarstvo kochevykh Uzbekov* (Moscow, 1965), appendix 2. It is

Seyyid Ahmed (of the House of Tuka Timur), which nomadised in the 1440s between the Dnieper and the North Caucasus,[42] was taken over by his relative Hadjdji Giray (from his patrimony, the Crimea) in stages between 1449 and 1455.[43] Concerning this, Safargaliyev notes

not certain when this happened. Perhaps in the 1450s. There is no evidence that the Trans-Yaik princes Musa and Yamgurchu Mankit (who later deserted Abu'l-Khayr after he had their father Vakkas killed) became vassals of Ahmed of Namagan, though they assisted Ahmed (and the Shibanid Ibak) in the breaking of Abu'l-Khayr's son Shaikh Haydar.

[42] See the quotation – from a letter of King Kazimierz – printed in L.Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Ksiestwa Litewskiego za Jagiellonow* (Warsaw, 1930) 265, note 4. See also the quotations and references in *ibid.*, 272, notes 4-7; 273, notes 1-3. Kolankowski misleadingly calls Seyyid Ahmed Khan of the Noghay Tatars (p.272). He meant that the khan occupied territories which were a century later to be occupied by some of the Noghay Tatars who then left their traditional grounds in lands east of the Yaik river.

[43] In spring 1453 Seyyid Ahmed was defeated by Hadjdji Giray (*ibid.*, 273 – the reference: the chronicle of Jan Dlugosz) who that year issued an instruction from "the Great Ulus" (see above, note 1). Mengli Giray described the winter of 1501-02 as similar to the one after which his father "took the Horde" (Karpov, PsMK, I, 414); perhaps he was referring to the winter of 1452-53. In 1455 Seyyid Ahmed was defeated by Hadjdji Giray once more and much of the rest of his Horde was taken (see the sources cited in Kolankowski, *op.cit.*, 280-81). Seyyid Ahmed and many of his nobles were taken into Lithuanian and Moldavian captivity. Spuler, followed by Grekov & Yakubovsky and, e.g., Inalcık, believes that Seyyid Ahmed escaped from captivity. In consequence we have a ghost-khan running about the steppe till 1465 (Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde,* 172-74; Grekov and Yakubovsky, op.cit., 420-21; Inalcık, "Hadjdji Giray" printed in H.A.R.Gibb et al., eds, *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* III, 44.) But Spuler was wrong. Ivan III, who understood these matters bętter than we do, wrote to Mengli Giray in 1504 – as of a well-known fact – about the death in Lithuanian captivity of Seyyid Ahmed (n.b., about the Tuka Timurid Seyyid Ahmed who was associated with Semenas Olelkaitis of Kiev, not the Seyyid Ahmed of Namagan who reigned 1484-90): Karpov, PsMK, I, 522. In a letter of 1464 the Genoese in Kaffa (in the Crimea) followed "the counsel of keeping the Great Khan of the Tatars [il gran Kan dei Tartari] Hadjdji Giray benevolent and friendly": *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria,* VII, parte 1 (Genoa, 1871), 321. This was before Hadjdji Giray's victory of 1465, when he took the Horde of Mahmud of Namagan: "all his lands together with the people and women" (Dlugosz, *Opera omnia,* V (Krakow, 1870) 397-98). Not all Seyyid Ahmed's Tatars submitted to Hadjdji Giray; included among these, perhaps were the royal princes Mamishek and Muhammed, the sons of Mustafa, who were eventually called into the service of Mengli Giray. The rest may have been those "orphans" (mentioned in Eminek Shirin's letter of 1478) who joined Ahmed of Namagan: A.Bennigsen et al., eds., *Le khanat de Crimée dans les archives du Musée du palais de Topkapi* (Paris-La Haye, 1978), 323.

that this event "promoted the recognition of the independence of the Crimean khanate"! Going on to treat the internal affairs of the patrimony of the rival house, Namagan, as though these were the affairs of the Great Horde (and at a time when the House of Namagan did not rule the Great Horde) Safargaliyev writes: "the elimination [?] of the Horde of Seyyid Ahmed [by the "Crimean" Hadjdji Giray] which had rivalled the Great Horde [?] made Kuchuk Muhammed [of Namagan] the sole khan of all the Tatars nomadising in the east European steppe; this should have led to a growth in the power of [Kuchuk Muhammed's] Great Horde, but that did not happen". (It did not happen because Hadjdji Giray now ruled the Great Horde, not Kuchuk Muhammed.) Safargaliyev opines that it "did not happen" because Astrakhan (the Namagan patrimony) "fell away from the Great Horde [ruled by Kuchuk Muhammed or his son]", i.e., it fell away from nothing. Then, observing what appears to have been a struggle between Kuchuk Muhammed's sons Ahmed and Mahmud, for control of the family patrimony Astrakhan (while under the impression that one of them, Ahmed, was then also ruler of the Great Horde), Safargaliyev sees only the creation of an independent khanate – Astrakhan – "whose throne was without question confirmed for the heirs of Mahmud".[44] But this also is incorrect: Astrakhan belonged to the House of Namagan, which is why the heirs of Mahmud's brother Ahmed also came to rule it.[45]

Eventually in the late 1460s and early 1470s the Great Horde Tatars quit the Tuka Timurid heirs of Hadjdji Giray and moved east[46] to pass under the control of the House of Namagan once more: "the people rode towards Astrakhan ... for where there is trouble, people go away from that place".[47] This population movement and dynastic change has passed unnoticed, probably because of the assumption that the Great

[44] Safargaliyev, *op.cit.*, 263, 264, 266.

[45] E.g., Ak Kepek and Yamgurchu.

[46] Mengli Giray to Ivan III: "when my father Emperor Hadjdji Giray took the Horde a merchant lived in my mother's [court] and he was suitable for any business. After the *uluses* rode towards Astrakhan he stayed in Astrakhan" (Karpov, PsMK, I, 270-71).

[47] Mengli Giray to Ivan III: "where evil lives, the people go away from that land" (*ibid.*, 288).

Horde, recently confused with the Tatars subject to the Trans-Volgine House of Namagan, had been ruled already for ages by the heirs of Namagan and Timur Kutluk.

Officials in Poland and Lithuania in the late Middle Ages often sensibly referred to the khans belonging to the House of Namagan as Trans-Volgines (for their patrimony lay across the Volga) whether they ruled the Great Horde or not, even when their "Trans-Volgine" Tatars were sitting outside Kiev. Similarly they often referred to the Tuka Timurids of the Crimean patrimony as "Crimeans" or emperors "of the Ditch"[48] whether or not the latter ruled the Great Horde as well as the Crimea. Unlike us they did know where the Great Horde was, what it was, and who ruled it at any given time. Similar was the case with the Norman kings of Sicily – people knew that the Sicilians were not Normans.

The admirable Prince Shcherbatov wrote in 1774 "they talk frequently in Russia about the Great Horde, but nobody knows much about what that was".[49] Ah! Certainly, when Andrey Lyzlov came to write his interesting history of the Tatars in the 1690s he knew rather less than we can know about the nature and resolution of the dynastic struggle for the Great Horde, or as Murteza of Namagan wrote to Mengli Giray's brother of that struggle "about the bone", a struggle for "the ankle-bone marrow"[50] that is, the struggle for precedence and mastery of the senior patrimony or Great patrimony of Batu: the people of the Great Horde. Using the Russian sources available to him and Catholic printed works as well, Lyzlov noted how in 1501 the khan Shaikh Ahmed (son of Ahmed of Namagan and brother to Murteza) came to the west with his "Trans-Volgine Horde"[51] to aid Lithuania against Moscow. Sixteenth-century authors had noted correctly that this expedition resulted in the end of the Trans-Volgine Shaikh

[48] "... eundem Transtanaitanum alias Zawolhensem..."; "illum Fossatus elatus fortunatarum et novarum accessionum augmento...": F.Papee, ed., *Akta Aleksandra,* Monumenta medii aevi historica res gestas Poloniae illustrantia, XIX (Krakow, 1927), 448-49.

[49] Shcherbatov, *op.cit.*, III, 33.

[50] Karpov, PsMK, I, 69.

[51] A.Lyzlov, *Skifskaya istoriya.* Lyzlov's manuscript, finished in 1692 (?) was printed in Saint Petersburg, 1776. See p.59.

Ahmed's kingdom. (Herberstein, for example, wrote "atque hic Zawolhensius regum finis fuit",[52] i.e. the Trans-Volgines, representatives of the House of Namagan, had lost control of the Great Horde.) Thus the stage was set, it seems, for the extinction of the Great Horde for the umpteenth time. (For surely, if we apply the logic of its "disappearance" in 1502 to the circumstances of its previous changes in leadership then we might conclude that the Great Horde had "ceased to exist" so that its name "never arose again" on numerous occasions. A Phoenix Horde! Another pre-Karamzin writer, Aleksey Malinovsky, wrote that "Ivan III finally destroyed the Tatars of the Great Horde" but he also drew this more interesting conclusion (he did have all the relevant documents under his hand after all, some of them he read, some he copied out): "This event had a great influence on the spread of the might of the Crimean Tatars. Having destroyed [?] the ancient enemies of Russia they themselves, through an increase in strength, then became its bitterest destroyers"[53] in other words, after 1502 the Great Horde continued to be a burden upon the Russian people and its change of leadership in 1502 was not "a triumph of Muscovite foreign policy".

The history of a state cannot be structured out of the terminology employed by foreigners to describe it. Let us therefore follow the advice of Great Khan Mengli Giray – that pioneer of archival research – and examine some documents. We may be able to establish firmly that the "taking" of the Great Horde in 1502 was not coincidental with its destruction. If this can be done, then all the wealth of detail concerning the Great Horde after 1502 and available – though mostly in manuscript sources – can be exploited (not here) to shed light on the internal history of that state before 1502, i.e. in that age of its history when its doings are thought usuful to explain the mature concerns of more important foreign, Christian states.

[52] S. von Herberstein, "Rerum Moscoviticarum commentarii" printed in A. de Starczewski, ed., *Historiae ruthenicae, scriptores exteri, saeculi XVI,* I (Berlin, 1841) 100.

[53] A.Malinovsky, "Istoricheskoye i diplomaticheskoye sobraniye del...". This work, written in the 1790s, was printed in *Zapiski Odesskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostey,* V (Odessa, 1863). See pp.276, 253.

On one occasion three of Mengli Giray's ambassadors saw the King of Poland and "recalled past sovereigns... [Tuka Timurids who had ruled the Great Horde] Toktamysh, Djelal ed-Din, Per Berdi, Kepek, Kerimberdi, Kadirberdi, [Ulugh] Muhammed, Seyyid Ahmed, Hadjdji Giray" and Mengli Giray wrote to the King: "Look in your archives ... Order the letters of [those Great Khans] to be read out to you. You will learn the truth from them."[54] Sound advice.

The *ordu* and *uluses* of the Great Horde

In the summer of 1502 Mengli Giray wrote a letter to the governor of Kiev. (The name of the governor, an official in the service of the ruler of Lithuania, was Prince Dimitriy Putyatich.) In this missive Mengli Giray declared that he had just acquired his "father's throne".[55] The Great Khan did not mean by this that he had recently become khan in the Crimea for – as Putyatich well knew – Mengli Giray had been khan in the Crimea without interrruption since 1478. Nor did he mean that he had come into possession of a piece of furniture which he was anxious to sell. (Though he was in debt.)[56] He was intimating that he had just come into possesion of the state known as the Great Horde.

Tatars in the middle ages referred to the master of the Great Horde as the possessor of "the Throne". Thus, in 1478, the chief Tatar prince in the Crimean khanate (one Eminek of the noble House of Shirin) described the ruler of the Great Horde (Ahmed) as "the khan of the Throne".[57] This was a long-standing tradition. The fourteenth century author ibn Fadlallah el-Omari (d.1348 or 1349) recorded that the Great Khan called himself "the possessor of the Throne".[58] It was not unusual for Tatars also to call this the "Throne of Batu Sain". (Batu, also called Sain, was regarded as the founder of the Great Horde.) In 1481, for example, the Great Horde was "taken" by the khan Ibak, a

[54] Pulaski, *Akta,* 292-93.
[55] *Ibid.*, 265.
[56] Mengli Giray to Ivan III, September 1502: "this year I have given away all the money I possessed" (Karpov, PsMK, I, 446).
[57] Bennigsen, *op.cit.*, 323.
[58] Tizengauzen, *op.cit.*, I, 250.

descendant of Batu's brother Shiban. Some years later Ibak mentioned in a letter to Ivan III that he had once "taken the throne of Batu".[59] Precisely what he meant we can discover from a letter written by Mengli Giray in 1481. Part of this letter, happily, was printed in 1846,[60] and more of it was published in 1881. It is a letter to Kazimierz, King of Poland, and it concerns a great event. The translation of this letter runs as follows: "On 21 January the Shibanid khan... Ibak came... accompanied by Prince Mahmud, Obat... Musa and Yamgurchu; [the last two were princes of the Trans-Yaik Tatars] they trampled Ahmed's *ordu* and killed khan Ahmed. Then they took all his people and the uluses; having gathered them together, they moved away. Prince Temir [head of the Great Horde branch of the noble House of the Mankit] and the sons of Ahmed Khan and their servants came to take refuge with me... I gave many horses and a great quantity of apparel to the sons of Ahmed and to Temir".[61] When, therefore, we ask what did Mengli Giray mean when he wrote to Putyatich that he had taken the "Throne" we can suppose he meant he had taken possession of something called the Great Khan's "*ordu*" together with his "people" and had taken also something called the "*ulus*es". What were these elements of which the Great Horde appears to have been composed? Could they indeed have been gathered together quickly by a successful contender for the possession of the Throne?

"*Ordu*" is a Tatar word. It is put into Russian as "*orda*" and Englished as "Horde". This word in its English, Russian and Tatar forms often means the whole of a nomadic people-state-government and people. But "*ordu*" and "*orda*" do not always mean the whole state, so we must take care when we read "*orda*" in an original passage in Russian, or in a Russian translation of a Tatar document. Let me give one illustration to show why we must take care when confronted by an "*ordu*". Under 1502 the Russian chronicler wrote: "The taking of the *ordu* by the Crimean Emperor Mengli Giray. This year the Crimean Emperor Mengli Giray defeated Shaikh Ahmed, Emperor of

[59] Karpov, PsMK, I, 199.
[60] In K.Golebiowski, *Dzieje Polski za panowania Jagiellonow*, III (Warsaw, 1848).
[61] Pulaski, *Akta*, 209.

the Great *ordu* and took the *ordu*".[62] Now we can be certain that Mengli Giray defeated Shaikh Ahmed, ruler of the Great Horde, but does "took the *ordu*" mean "took the whole of the people-state called the Great Horde"? A reader who suspects (rightly) that "*ordu*" does not always mean the whole state could suppose (wrongly) that the Russian chronicler meant that Mengli Giray had taken in 1502 rather less than the whole state, i.e., the *ordu* (whatever that was) which was only a part of the Great Horde. What, therefore, does *ordu* mean when it is used to indicate only part of the Tatar state?

Luckily there exists a short description of such an *ordu* in the writings of an eyewitness, the fourteenth-century traveller Ibn Battuta. This will serve for an introduction to this Great Horde institution. Observing the approach of the *ordu* of the Great Khan Uzbek he wrote: "We saw a great town, with all its inhabitants, *moving*. In it were mosques and markets and the smoke of cooking rising in the air. They prepare food while in motion, as horses pull the waggons. When they reach a stopping place they take down tents from the waggons and set them on the ground. Similarly do they set up mosques and shops".[63] The Great Horde *ordu* of the late fifteenth century was the political, religious, administrative and military centre of the state. In it were found the treasury, the administrative records and archives of diplomatic correspondence, together with the officials of high and low rank responsible for them. One officer of the treasury (*ordubazar*) was a certain Burnashek whom Shaikh Ahmed sent to Kiev on business in 1501. (We know of him because when he died Mengli Giray described him as "my *bazar* official" whose "things" were under seal in Kiev: "those things are my things".)[64] This was an hereditary occupation. Many of the diplomats in the *ordu* were also hereditary diplomats. Thus, in 1484 Grand Prince Temir Mankit of the Great Horde sent as ambassador to Lithuania a certain Prince "Aitolmish" [Elchi Toktamish?] of whom he wrote "he is a great man" holding by virtue of his birth "the place of the *Elchi* [ambassador] held by his forefathers".[65] A

[62] PSRL, VIII, 242.
[63] Tizengauzen, *op.cit.*, I, 289.
[64] Pulaski, *Akta*, 265, 311.
[65] *Ibid.*, 213-14.

similar family in diplomacy was that of Tahir (envoy of Ahmed Khan to Kazimierz in 1479); Tahir's "younger brother Tabin" was the envoy of Khan Murteza to Lithuania in 1484, while "Tahir's son Yusuf" was sent to Lithuania by Shaikh Ahmed Khan in 1496. (All three were in Mengli Giray's service after 1502).[66]

The *ordu* also contained the courts of the khan, of his wives and of such of his male relatives as chose to abide with him. (Most of the khan's relatives lived in or near Astrakhan, in the family patrimony. An exception was the ex-Great Khan Murteza who was khan in Tumen on the river Terek, a petty state.)[67] The numerous nobles and servants in these courts were maintained by their royal masters; they were in turn responsible for the ordering of the public and private life of the members of the royal house and also for their security. Prominent among the *ordu* officials were the master of the camp and the chief of the khan's bodyguards. The chief of Shaikh Ahmed's guards may have been a certain Djahangir Bahadur whom the khan sometimes sent on important diplomatic missions. Introducing Djahangir to Aleksandr of Lithuania Shaikh Ahmed wrote: "he is my honest servant. From his youth he has served me and protected me. For my sake one of his eyes was spoiled and his nose damaged".[68]

The Muslim religious establishment of the Great Horde – the chief judges and jurisconsults – also travelled with the *ordu.* A representative of this group was "Molzozoda" who quit the *ordu* in 1500 to take service with Mengli Giray. Concerning him a Muscovite envoy wrote: "the khan told us that in the autumn the Great Mullah of the *bazar* of the sons of Ahmed came to serve him". Another such was Hadjdji Ahmed Seyyid who was sent to Lithuania in 1501 to beseech assistance when Shaikh Ahmed was in desperate straits.[69]

Perhaps the most important political figures in the *ordu,* after the khan, were the Grand Princes – the heads of great Tatar noble families, whose underlings and relatives controlled many of the common Tatar nomads (who lived outside the *ordu*).[70] The four most

[66] *Ibid.*, 210, 211, 220, 378.
[67] Murteza was Great Khan in 1484, 1489-90, 1494, 1497.
[68] Pulaski, *Akta,* 256.
[69] *Ibid.;* 258; Karpov, PsMk, I, 354.
[70] *Ibid.;* 108; Pulaski, *Akta,* 264.

powerful princes were known as the Great *Karaches*. Without their support the government of the Great Khan would falter or collapse utterly. One of Shaikh Ahmed's *karaches* was the chief prince of the noble House of Kiat, who is mentioned in a letter sent by the khan to Prince Mikhaylo Hlinsky and his brothers. (Mikhaylo was a direct descendant of the famous Tatar ruler of the late fourteenth century, Mamay Kiat [as Shaikh Ahmed noted][71] and was the grandfather of the Muscovite Tsar Ivan the Terrible: Mamay, Mansur, Oleksa, Ivan, Boris, Lev, Mikhaylo, Yelena, Ivan IV).[72] Another *karach* was the head of the Great Horde branch of the prestigious noble House of the Mankit. One of the grand *karaches* was the chief minister of the *ordu*. From 1484 to 1502 the chief ministers were all Mankits, first Temir, then his brother (or cousin) Achika, then Temir's son Tevkel (1498-1502).

The *ordu* represented, furthermore, a formidable military power. In 1501, according to a Muscovite observer, it contained 20,000 fighting men.[73] The Lithuanian ambassador Chalecki – a Tatar-speaker – apparently reported that Shaikh Ahmed had 60,000 soldiers, for Aleksandr informed his brother (Cardinal Fryderyk) in March 1502 that the khan had "an army of 60,000 men".[74] We cannot however be sure that this figure relates just to the number of soldiers in the *ordu*; it could embrace the *ordu* troops and as well the fighting men whom the khan could levy from among the *uluses*, outside the *ordu*.

If we take into account the women, old people and children who travelled with the *ordu* – the families of its officials, servants, soldiers and slaves, merchants and tradesmen – then we will understand that the *ordu* of the Great Horde took up a considerable space, due to the numerous waggons and animals which carried about the people of the *ordu* and their possessions.

It now seems fairly clear what Mengli Giray meant in his letter of 1481 when he wrote "Ibak... trampled the *ordu* and... took [the

[71] *Ibid.*, 264.

[72] *Vremennik Imperatorskogo moskovskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostey rossiyskikh*, X (Moscow, 1851), 195.

[73] Karpov, PsMK, I, 367.

[74] Papee, *Akta Aleksandra*, 67.

khan's] people". But what of the *uluses*? The power of the rulers of the Great Horde ultimately depended not upon the *ordu,* but upon the support and service of the common people. The common people of the Great Horde were divided into administrative-economic units called *uluses*. These people were principally nomadic pastoralists, rearing horses, horned cattle, camels and sheep; they also raised crops.[75] (In 1492 they were reported to have "ploughed arable land", on another occasion "their corn did not grow and their animals were lost", while in 1500 it was said that they were unable to raise crops by the river Kuma due to the hostility of the Circassians and the people of Tumen.)[76] Many of the *uluses* were under the management of princes who spent much of their time in the *ordu.* The *uluses* in all the Tatar states were directly controlled by the nominees of the royal family and the great nobles. We read, for example, that a noble, one of the *karaches* in the Khanate of Kazan, possessed five *uluses*. Mengli Giray wrote of this man "his people have five *uluses*".[77] A large proportion of the *uluses* in the Great Horde were under the authority of the head of the House of the Mankits. There exists a letter written by a Crimean prince which tells us something of the power of the Great Horde Mankits. In 1478 the head of the Mankit House, Temir, was at odds with the Great Khan Ahmed. Eminek Shirin wrote: "we have just heard that the khan of the Throne is advancing on Temir [Mankit]. If this comes about then Temir will come close to us [to the Crimea] because he will be pushed towards us. That will not fail to harm us because the people [lesser nobles and *ulus* Tatars] who depend from us will rally to him".[78] – This quotation reminds us that the *ulus* Tatars were nomads, able to strip a khan or their princes of power by moving away to seek better circumstances under another noble or khan and, by so doing, to strengthen their new master whose power would be augmented by their adherence. "Where there is trouble" wrote Mengli Giray, who understood these matters well, "the people go away".[79] One *ulus* of

[75] J.Barbaro and A.Contarini, *Travels to Tana and Persia,* ed. by Lord Stanley of Alderley (London, 1873), 9-16.
[76] Karpov, PsMK, I, 113, 149, 167.
[77] *Ibid.*, II, 73.
[78] Bennigsen, *op.cit.*, 323.
[79] Karpov, PsMK, I, 288.

Great Horde Tatars submitted to Mengli Giray in 1500; it comprised 3000 people. In his relation of this submission a Muscovite envoy described how one of the great men of the House of Namagan tried to stop this *ulus*: "Ebaga *ulan* and his brother... together with Kirey Kitay have come from the Horde to serve Mengli Giray. 3000 souls came with them... Ebaga brought to the Emperor Mengli Giray the son of Yakub, the royal Prince Mangishlak [Yakub was the brother of the late Ahmed Khan]. It is said that this royal prince wintered in Azov with 200 men. He came upon Ebaga *ulan* at the crossing [of the Don] but Ebaga defeated him... now that royal prince sits shackled in Kirk-yir" (Mangishlak of Namagan was the grandfather of the founder of the Astrakhanid dynasty of Bukhara.) Impoverishment was one reason for this submission. Mengli Giray wrote that the "*ulus*" had been robbed[80] – doubtless by Circassians.

The movements of the *uluses* were not always dictated by the *ordu*. To a certain extent the *ordu* was a prisoner of the *uluses* as can be seen from the following illustration. In 1492 the government in the *ordu* determined that the *uluses* should move in the direction of Circassia. However, the common people were reluctant to go thither and they demonstrated their reluctance by heading in another direction. What did the *ordu* do? "The *ordu* went after the *uluses*".[81] Again, in 1501 rumours reached the Crimea that the Great Horde "*uluses* did not want to be near the Circassians so Shaikh Ahmed moved with them to the Don".[82] (It was about this time that the khan determined to make his fateful journey to the Ukraine. Another factor contributing to this decision may have been the menace overhanging his relative-by-marriage[83] the Shah of Shirvan, Farokh Yasar, whose state was overwhelmed in 1501 by Shah Ismail. The Great Horde had occasionally used pasture lands [the Mughan steppe?] belonging to Farokh Yasar.)[84]

Barbaro noted in the 1430s that the common people (in that part of the Great Horde then ruled by Kuchuk Muhammed of Namagan)

[80] *Ibid.*, 323, 363.
[81] *Ibid.*, 167.
[82] *Ibid.*, 358.
[83] Pulaski, *Akta*, no.4.
[84] Karpov, PsMK, I, 277.

followed close upon the *ordu:* "when the Lord was departed then this people with their cattle followed. First herds of horses, 50,100 and 200 and more in a herd. After these followed herds of camels and oxen, and after them herds of small beasts, which endured for the space of six days, that as far as we might ken with our eyes the champaigne every way was full of people and beasts following on their way. And this was only the first part [of the *uluses*], whereby it is to be considered what a much greater number should be in the middle part..."[85] Similarly in 1501 did the *uluses* stay close to the Great Horde *ordu*. In the early summer of 1501 the *ordu* crossed the Don by the river Chir and then moved up the Don until it reached a point very close to the Muscovite frontier. On this journey the *uluses* followed the *ordu*, the latter positioning itself in such a way that it could shield the *uluses* from the combined *ordu* and *ulus* forces of Mengli Giray. Two months after it had crossed the Don the *ordu* was established on an island in the river Tikhaya Sosna, while the *uluses* were disposed behind the *ordu* – between that river and the Muscovite frontier.[86] A contemporary Muscovite source states: "Shaikh Ahmed stood in a fortress at the mouth of the Tikhaya Sosna... while Shaikh Ahmed's *uluses* were on this [Muscovite] side of the Don".[87] (The question, "why did Ivan III do nothing to obstruct this two-month march towards his frontier?" could perhaps be answered by another: "did Ivan III want the Great Horde to submit to his 'faithful ally' Mengli Giray?")

The usual proximity of the *ordu* and *uluses* doubtless facilitated the calling of general Councils: in the Great Horde after 1502 such a council, attended apparently by low-level representatives of the *ulus* Tatars, was called by Muscovite observers a "Council of the land" (*zemskaya duma*).[88]

If we bear in mind that the male *ulus* Tatars greatly outnumbered

[85] Barbaro, *op.cit.*, 11.

[86] Karpov, PsMK, I, 367-68.

[87] P.Milyukov, ed., "Drevneyshaya razryadnaya kniga" printed in E.V.Barsov, ed., *Chteniya v Imperatorskom obshchestve istorii i drevnostey rossiyskikh pri Moskovskom universitete* (Moscow, 1902), 29.

[88] Karpov, PsMK, II, 358.

the soldiers in the *ordu,* then we will understand that the Great Horde was potentally a formidable military power, and this perhaps explains why Muscovy's independence was so long delayed after 1380. The *ordu* alone constituted a significant force. If we accept the Muscovite estimation of the *ordu* troops in 1501 – 20,000, then we gather that these *ordu* troops were almost as numerous as the combined *ordu* and *ulus* troops of Mengli Giray in 1501! In 1501 Mengli Giray expected that many of the Great Horde Tatars would submit to him – "I expect many of their people will come to me".[89] In order to bring about a mass submission Mengli Giray asked his ally Ivan to send forces with cannon to frighten the Great Horde Tatars and also to drive off the *ulus* Tatars' cattle; the khan also raised the maximum possible number of troops from his family patrimony with which to confront the Great Horde on the Don. Having obtained the agreement of the masters of his *ulus* Tatars – the Kiat, Mankit, Shirin, Barin etc. princes in the Crimea – to a general levy he issued this order: "You must all... be ready to campaign alongside me. There must be one waggon to every five men; each man must have three horses. You must have arms and fodder. No one is to stay at home excepting those who are under 15 years of age. Whoever stays behind is... no servant of mine, or of my sons or princes. Such a man is to be stripped of his possessions and killed".[90] The force thus raised numbered 25,000 (according to the Muscovite diplomat who accompanied it; Muscovite envoys were most particular about figures and there seems no sound reason to doubt this estimation).[91] Had Shaikh Ahmed been able to levy his *ulus* Tatars then it is clear that he could have built a force many times larger than that of Mengli Giray. Why could he not do this? Perhaps he was uncertain of the loyalty of his *ulus* princes and, futhermore, the *ulus*

[89] *Ibid.*, I, 356.

[90] *Ibid.*, 354.

[91] E.g., in the early summer of 1500 a Muscovite envoy reported that the Shirin Prince Dovletek "has been sent by the khan together with Kazimer [the chief prince of the Kiat House in the Crimea] and other princes" to attack the Grand Principality of Lithuania, "and they say that with them were, in all, 800 men" i.e., the heads of the Kiat and Shirin houses led a none too considerable party. Meanwhile Dovletek's brother "Kochek, the son of Eminek, Ideshka... and Hozyai (also a Shirin)" returned from the principality" and with them, they say, were 1000 men": *ibid.*, 323. The figure 25,000 is mentioned on p.368.

Tatars were in poor condition. Many of these pastoralists, nomads *par excellence,* were *without horses*! This was a consequence of several successive bad seasons, poor grazing, bad harvests, harsh winters: the Great Horde was described as "thin', "hungry" and "lacking horses" in 1491, 1492, 1497, 1498, 1499, 1500 and 1501.[92] In 1501, it seems, Shaikh Ahmed, a great politician, used as a counter in the game of international relations the very weakness of the Great Horde. He won in the summer of 1501, but lost everything that winter.

In the summer of 1501 Shaikh Ahmed managed to preserve the loyalty of his princes and to protect his *uluses* from Mengli Giray. The records of Shaikh Ahmed's relations with Ivan III at this time have been destroyed, but Mengli Giray's stepson was in the service of Ivan and his brother-in-law was the chief prince in the Great Horde, so the khan in the Crimea doubtless knew why Moscow took no effective action against the Great Horde between May and mid-or late July and why his envoy Kutush, who arrived in Moscow on 23 July with instructions that he should be sent back "quickly", was held in Moscow until 8 August (leaving the very day another embassy from the khan arrived).[93] Mengli Giray was disappointed in his hopes that the Great Horde would submit and marched his forces back to the Crimea, leaving the Great Horde by the Muscovite frontier. "I have heard that you and I have an alliance"[94] he wrote to Ivan at this time. It seems

[92] *ibid.,* 167, 255, 323.

[93] "borzo, ne izderzhav": *ibid.,* 362, 363, 366.

[94] *Ibid.,* 366. "disgraceful", "inexplicable inertia" (Fennell, *op.cit.,* 245-46). In April 1502 Mengli Giray wrote to Ivan that if he found Shaikh Ahmed again in a fortress "I'll spend the summer there... while you... if you send troops you must not turn them back, but send me intelligence. And should you not send troops, or should they be not fully prepared, then you must keep me informed" (Karpov, PsMK, I, 414). Ivan had sent Mengli Giray's stepson Mehemmed Emin towards his southern frontier in July August 1501 but there ensued no hostilities with the Great Horde because of this. Why not? Aleksandr of Lithuania's alliance with Shaikh Ahmed was directed not against Mengli Giray but against Ivan. (Shaikh Ahmed to Aleksandr, summer 1501 "I did not follow Mengli Giray, but I kept my promise to you": Pulaski, *Akta,* 260.) Did Ivan not know this? Did he not know that the Great Horde – *ordu* and *uluses* – was by his frontier until Mengli Giray's envoy told him? Or was Ivan playing an elaborate game of nerves with Shaikh Ahmed with the purpose of limiting the damage to his own cause and of preparing to draw Shaikh Ahmed out of his alliance with Lithuania and into one with Moscow: Shaikh Ahmed was heading for Kiev – which Ivan wanted!

that Mengli Giray did not consider he should make war upon people he expected soon to rule.

The taking of the Great Horde

On 8 July 1502 Tatar ambassadors were received by the Lithuanian government. They announced that Mengli Giray had "by the grace of God overcome his rival [Shaikh Ahmed] and possessed all his people together with all his tents, pavilions, fortifications, women, boys, families, horses and beasts".[95] On 28 June a Muscovite envoy hastened to Moscow (five days ahead of Mengli Giray's ambassadors) bearing this news: "Emperor Mengli Giray has driven off Shaikh Ahmed and taken his *ordu* and *uluses*". He also reported that after Mengli Giray had "taken the *ordu* to the Crimea" he intended to attack Lithuania.[96] On 3 July Ivan III received letters from Mengli Giray. One of these began "having driven off my enemy Shaikh Ahmed, his *ordu* and all his *uluses* have been given into my hands by God".[97] Twelve days later Ivan sent a letter to Mengli Giray saying "God has granted your request. You have acquired your father's royal [Throne?] Horde".[98] At the same time Ivan wrote to his ambassador at Mengli Giray's court asking him to "write to me whatever news you hear about Emperor Shaikh Ahmed, about where he is now, and whether many *uluses* and people have gone with him".[99] Ivan was apparently interested to discover, *inter alia,* whether his "faithful ally" had indeed taken overall control of the Great Horde. Mengli Giray! Son-in-law of Prince Yadgar of the House of Seydzhut who had "like a wild beast"[100] destroyed much of Moscow in 1451. Son of Hadjdji Giray who as Great Khan had grandly given Smolensk and Novgorod to the King of Poland.[101] Heir of Toktamysh (Mengli Giray and his son Muhammed

[95] "[Mengli Giray] *sic factus duplicis hordae imperator*": Papee, *Akta, 3105-06.*
[96] *Karpov, PsMK, I, 419.*
[97] *Ibid.*, 420.
[98] *Ibid.*, 444.
[99] *Ibid.*, 426.
[100] *Ibid.*, 57; PSRL, XX, 262.
[101] The document is in *Teki Naruszewicza,* XX, 173. I have not seen it. It was cited in Kolankowksi, *op.cit.*, 309 note 2.

Giray always referred to Toktamysh with respect, calling him "grandfather") who had sacked Moscow in 1382. Mengli Giray, who in his youth and while still able to claim to be Great Khan, apparently before all the Great Horde *uluses* submitted to Ahmed of Namagan, had donated Smolensk, Odoyev and Ryazan' to the King of Poland![102] Mengli Giray, step-father of the Tuka Timurid Khans Abd al-Latif of Kazan ("our patrimony") and Mehemmed Emin of Meshchera (Kasimov) –"our patrimony"[103]– who would have dared to face Ivan III and *credit* him with Mengli Giray's achievement in 1502? Mengli Giray did not thank him; he merely asked him to rejoice!

How did Shaikh Ahmed of Namagan lose the Great Horde for the third time? In August 1501 the *ordu* – reduced in strength by as many as thirty men (killed in duels with Mengli Giray's knights)[104] but augmented by the force of a Mankit noble, Udem,[105] who came either from Kazan or Meshchera – quickly covered the hundred kilometres separating its temporary fortress from the frontier of great provinces newly won by Ivan III from Lithuania, the hearths of the princes Shemyachich and Mozhaysky. Accompanied by the *uluses* the *ordu* moved to Kanev (in Lithuanian hands) and took Ryl'sk, Chernigov and Novgorod-Sieverskiy. Shaikh Ahmed forbade looting and handed these places to the Lithuanian ambassador. In November Shaikh Ahmed's brother wrote to Aleksandr of Lithuania "we want to winter by Kiev" while Shaikh Ahmed wrote "having crossed the Desna we shall winter on your side". The *ordu* was established by Kiev while the *uluses* scattered to find winter food for their animals. In February-March 1502 the *ordu* moved to the mouth of the Sula (a tributary of the Dnieper) and built fortifications some 250 kilometres from Kiev.[106]

Communications between the *ordu* and *uluses* broke down during the winter. Shaikh Ahmed wrote "a hard winter came, a great snow

[102] Pulaski, *Akta*, 292-93. In 1471-72 Mengli Giray was still addressed as "*Thartarorum terre imperator, Mengli Giray, magnus Caesar*" (by the King of Bohemia) and as "*potenti domino Mengli Giray, magno imperatori terre Thartarorum*" (by the King of Poland): *ibid.*, 192-200.

[103] Karpov, PsMK, II, 251.

[104] *Ibid.*, I, 368.

[105] Pulaski, *Akta*, 261.

[106] *Ibid.*, 263? Karpov, PsMK, I, 419.

fell. My people could not move. The servants and *uluses* were far away". Many Tatars ran short of food and some raided territories in the Ukraine possessed by Aleksandr. Tevkel Mankit wrote to Aleksandr: "Our people and servants were far off and we have shamed you. Without the khan's knowledge and without my knowledge, horsemen and footmen, hungry and starved, have caused damage to your Ukraine people. Those who went were seeking corn".[107]

At the beginning of 1502 some starving *ulus* Tatars began to submit to Mengli Giray: "50 men on foot have come from the Horde while others have come with their women".[108] In April 1502 Ivan III (in Moscow) was informed in a chirpy letter from Mengli Giray about the harshness of the winter. And about bird life: "at this time people here are usually reaping and larks are building their nests. But now an unusual winter has come. When Hadjdji Giray took the Horde, such was the winter, and apart from that occasion I cannot recall such a winter".[109] In January Mengli Giray got his princes' agreement to another general levy of his *ulus* Tatars – they were given two months to prepare – and he put the finishing touches to his father's mausoleum: inscribed upon it were the words "Aid from God and a quick victory".[110] At the beginning of May Mengli Giray's forces crossed the Perekop isthmus to the mainland. They were met at Mare Waters by a Great Horde *ulus*. These people had been marching south for up to 25 days before encountering the Khan. "That *ulus* is going on to Perekop" it was reported. According to the Muscovite envoy "other people met the Emperor at the Samara river". At that place Mengli Giray wrote of the submission of many Great Horde nobles: "now many noble people, having quit Shaikh Ahmed, have come to me here". It is not unlikely that this party included Shaikh Ahmed's wife and Udem Mankit. (On 6 June Mengli Giray wrote "Udem has lent me his strength and now abides with me".) Advancing "very quickly" from

[107] Pulaski, *Akta,* 258-60.
[108] Karpov, PsMK, I, 381.
[109] *Ibid.,* 414.
[110] Dambrovski and Borzenko, "Bakhchisarayskiye arabskiye i turetskiye nadpisi" (*Zapiski Odesskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostey,* II [Odessa, 1848], 526).

the Samara he approached the rivers Sula[111] and Turpachaya *voda,* where the remnants of the *ordu* and *uluses* were concentrated.

During the winter of 1501-2 the harsh weather destroyed the military capability of the great Horde *ordu,* while Shaikh Ahmed's intransigence, and the appalling situation of the *ordu* and *uluses*, cut the ties which bound the chiefs of the *ordu* to him. In November 1501 there came to the *ordu* an envoy from Ivan who offered to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Great Khan if the latter would end his alliance with Lithuania. Tevkel's wife wrote to Aleksandr "they sent a letter from Moscow and we have sent that letter on to you with Mikhail [Chalecki]." Tevkel wrote "Ivan, the dependent of my Emperor says this: I shall be his soldier and dependent [*ratay i kholop*]". But Shaikh Ahmed refused to accede to this request made just before the approach of winter, and asked Aleksandr to send at least 4000 troops to his assistance. This aid had long ago been promised. Shaikh Ahmed's mother Dovlet Saltana (widow of the Great Ahmed who had been let down by Kazimierz in 1480) tried to exert moral pressure on Aleksandr: "my husband and emperor Ahmed was in brotherhood with your father the king, and both have gone to face God". So did Shaikh Ahmed who wrote: "You asked me to come to you with all my House and I have come to you with all my House and with all my knights as you asked... I stood 40 days with the *ordu* by Kanev and even after that there came no news of you whatsoever." (Grand Prince Aleksandr, crowned King of Poland on 12 December 1501, was unable to raise troops to aid his ally or the Grand Principality in circumstances which caused his vice-chancellor to write, later: "we have discovered the significance of private affluence and public insufficiency".) Tevkel Mankit wrote: "we stand between two armies ready to fight either Mengli Giray or the dependent [*kholop*] Ivan. If you do not come quickly then we cannot stay between two armies".[112]

In April more envoys came to the *ordu* from Moscow and Shaikh Ahmed's people captured the despatches of one of Mengli Giray's envoys to Ivan – which included a copy of a letter detailing the khan's plans to win over the Great Horde (he planned to take cannon with

[111] Karpov, PsMK, I, 416, 419, 421.
[112] Pulaski, *Akta,* 259, 260, 262; Papee, *Akta,* 120.

him) and the reference to the taking of the Horde by Hadjdji Giray. Ivan's envoys brought to Shaikh Ahmed "those gifts which he did not give to my father or to my brothers".[113] The khan's advisers apparently urged him to break with Aleksandr but he refused. Neither Ivan's promises nor his gifts were enough. Shaikh Ahmed raised the stakes; but the table collapsed. The only assistance Aleksandr could send him was the news that the Poles had ratified their alliance with the Great Horde and a doctor who arrived too late to treat Shaikh Ahmed's brother Enay. Coming on top of everything else the death of his "good brother" put the khan into a deep depression. Then, led by his wife Djan Saltana Mankit, most of the *ordu* people broke with the khan and marched south to submit to Mengli Giray. In a speech delivered before the assembled nobility of Poland at Radom in 1504 Shaikh Ahmed declared that his wife had taken with her "the greatest part of his forces" and submitted to Mengli Giray. This was no sudden flight, for the Muscovite ambassador to the Great Horde was able to give a message to a man who travelled with the deserting *ordu* people; that message was for the Muscovite ambassador to the court of Mengli Giray. (Mengli Giray, not the ambassador, received this message.)[114]

Mengli Giray's forces took the *ordu*'s positions between 2 and 6 June. At Radom in 1504 Shaikh Ahmed said that the Tatars who had deserted his *ordu* joined Mengli Giray's forces in the attack on these positions, and that the *ordu* people in those positions were either killed or captured.[115] We have no means of knowing whether this was a great or small engagement. Shaikh Ahmed escaped. There is no evidence that he was pursued. His party included his mother, his brothers Hudjak and Halek, his chief prince, Tevkel Mankit, other notables, his household retainers and the Muscovite and Polish envoys. On his eastward journey Shaikh Ahmed picked up some stray *ulus*es which were close to the Don. In mid-August the Muscovite

[113] Pulaski, *Akta,* 264-65.

[114] B.Wapowski, "Kroniki Bernarda Wapowskiego" published in *Scriptores rerum polonicarum,* II (Krakow, 1874), 56; the doctor Isak did not get home till 1504; a long House-call: T.Wierzbowski, ed., *Matricularium regni poloniae,* pars III, (Warsaw) no.1418, p.89; Pulaski, *Akta,* 258,; Karpov, PsMK, I, 418; Papee, *Akta,* 104.

[115] Wapowski, *op.cit.,* 56.

ambassador in the Crimea replied to his master's request for information (of 15 July) as follows: "they say he has 4000 people with him, they say he had *uluses* with him, but very few".

Did this "Trans-Volgine Emperor" return to his Trans-Volgine Empire? No. He had no Trans-Volgine empire. The Namagan patrimony east of the Volga was mostly possessed by another member of his family, the Khan Abd al-Karim of Astrakhan (the son, or brother of Shaikh Ahmed's uncle, Mahmud). Shaikh Ahmed was no stranger to misfortune. He had lost three thrones and had had previous experience of his horse "growing sweaty beneath him" as he fled disaster. With characteristic energy he set about finding allies. But his party shrank as his followers deserted to find places for themselves in Astrakhan or the Great Horde. Within a year his *ordu* has been slimmed to 500 men who were as afraid of his allies as they were of his enemies. Prince Tevkel Mankit later wroter of his experiences after 6 June: "I lived like a Cossack". Some minor Trans-Yaik princes told the ex-Great Khan "we grieve for you".[116] Muscovite envoys in the Great Horde reported that Shaikh Ahmed could not recover it: "he has no means". His brother Murteza, Seyyid Muhammed, Bahadur and the khan Abd al-Karim desired "to recover our patrimony"[117] – the Great Horde, but only Abd al-Karim had any firm power base. (Seyyid Muhammed had sought to enter the service of Ivan already in 1501. Two of Shaikh Ahmed's nephews, Yusuf and Isak entered Ivan's service in 1502.)[118] Shaikh Ahmed's brothers – and Ivan III – thought that the best solution was to establish him in Astrakhan. (Moscow's interest in helping this extraordinary politician to secure a new power base is self-explanatory.) But Abd al-Karim objected[119] and Shaikh Ahmed spent the years 1504-27[120] west of the Dnieper, mostly in

[116] Karpov, PsMK, I, 433, 456, 467, 518.
[117] Pulaski, *Akta,* 279.
[118] V.Tatishchev, *Istoriya rossiyskaya* (reprinted Moscow-Leningrand, 1966), VI, 96; Karpov, PsMK, I, 385.
[119] *Ibid.*, 456, 486, 490.
[120] According to Spuler, the "last Khan" of the Golden Horde was beheaded in 1505: B.Spuler, *The Mongols in History* (London, 1971), 104; cf. his "Aussenpolitik der Goldenen Horde" (*Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas,* Jahr. 5, Heft 3/4 (Breslau, 1940). 365. Shaikh Ahmed was in fact sent to Astrakhan via Vilnius and Kiev in spring 1527. See Sambocki to Dantiscus, 14 June 1527: *Akta Tomiciana,* IX, 212. He was

Grand Principality of Lithuania.

How did Mengli Giray deal with his new subjects? Did for example Kiat *uluses* go to Mengli Giray's Kiat princes, etc? Where were the common people established? Our chief source of information about the Great Horde after 1502 is the Muscovite "Crimean" archive, which had been opened in 1472.[121] Unfortunately it contains no letters from the Great Horde between June 1503 and July 1504, while records of Muscovite-Great Horde relations between March 1505 and October 1508, between September 1509 and May 1515 are also missing. One consequence of this is that the first surviving letter from Moscow after 1502 addressed to "the Great Khan of the Great Horde"[122] is dated May 1515. Careful examination of unpublished Great Horde records relating to the period after 1530 should shed some light on these questions. But in any case the evidence we do possess is something luxuriant compared with that concerning previous take-overs of the Great Horde. Under 1382, for example, virtually all we have is this: "Mamay's princes dismounted, beat their foreheads on the ground before Toktamysh and swore allegiance to him... This Emperor Toktamysh took Mamay's *ordu* and his empresses and his treasury and caught all his *uluses*".[123] (Note how closely these events seem to resemble those of 1502.) This evidence cannot be examined here, for I lack space, but one or two points can be made.

On 4 February 1503 Mengli Giray sent a pregnant message to Ivan: "Prince Tevkel has come". Tevkel, the man best informed about Great Horde-Muscovite relations had submitted to the Great Khan. Mengli Giray wrote: "I have given him his father's place and treasury and districts... and since he has sworn his oath and called me his sovereign... there is [now] no evil between us. We have put aside the evil between us and have laid our souls under one breast". Tevkel's uncle Achika (chief prince in the Great Horde 1487-94, 1497) also submitted (in 1504). He eventually succeeded Tevkel as head of the Mankit House. Eventually the Mankit *uluses* of Tevkel came to be

escorted to the frontier by 5,000 Lithuanian cavalry

[121] Karpov, PsMK, I, 448, 451, 474.

[122] *Ibid.*, II, 132.

[123] PSRL, VIII, 41.

called the *uluses* of Mansur (Tevkel's great-grandfather) so that they could be distinguished from the *uluses* of other branches of the Mankit House. In 1515 Muhammed Giray wrote that the Mankit, Barin and Shirin princes made him khan.[124]

In 1502, conscious that Shaikh Ahmed might find allies and seek to win back the Great Horde, Mengli Giray appears to have settled many common Tatars west of the Dnieper. In the summer of 1502, for example, his younger sons collected an army of 70,000 men at a point west of the Dnieper for an expedition against Poland and Lithuania.[125] (That was the greatest Tatar attak made upon the west for a century. According to a Polish source that army was composed of "Crimeans mixed with Trans-Volgines," i.e. Great Horde Tatars.)[126]

In 1501 Mengli Giray had been able to raise 25,000 men. Various reports made in 1502 record the great increase in his power. It was reported from Moldavia that Mengli Giray now possessed "100,000 horsemen". A Polish author noted that the "60,000 men" and "more than 100,000 women and boys" of Shaikh Ahmed's Horde passed under Mengli Giray.[127] Mengli Giray's success in 1502 caused Tatars from Kazan to enter his service. (One Kazan noble, Agish, succeeded Eminek's son as head of the House of Shirin in 1508.) In 1509 Mengli Giray took numerous Nogay (Trans-Yaik) and Astrakhan *uluses*: it apparently took 20 days for these to pass through the entrance to the peninsula. In 1509 Mengli Giray is reported to have sent 250,000 men against Astrakhan. "I shall be a Toktamysh"[128] he said. In 1504 the King of Poland reported that the Great Khan had plans to establish his

[124] Karpov, PsMK, I, 471, 518, 515, 520; II, 500, 156.

[125] Near the rivers Sinyukha and Southern Bug: *ibid.*, I, 432.

[126] Wapowski, *op.cit.*, 50. The attacks embraced an area including Krakow, Kiev, Turov, Lwow, Lublin: Karpov, PsMK, I, 469.

[127] E. de Hurmuzaki, ed., *Documente privitoare la istoria Romanilor*, VIII (Bucarest, 1894), 37; Maciej z Miechowa, "De sarmatia asiana & europaea" in J.Pistorius, ed., *Poloniae historiae corpus* (Basle, 1582), 129.

[128] Karpov, PsMK, II, 70, 80, 172. The khan of Kazan recognised Mengli Giray, of course. In a letter to the King of Poland of 1506 "Mehemmed Emin tsar' of Kazan" mentioned "the Great Tsar' Mengli Giray": Pulaski, *Akta*, 294.

son-in-law on the Ottoman throne.[129] What were the chief consequences for Tatar history of the events of 1502? There were two. 1502 marks the end of the dynastic struggle for mastery of the Great Horde. The power of the House of Namagan in Europe was broken. (In the mid-sixteenth century there were, apparently, just 10,000 common Tatars in the khanate of Astrakhan.)[130] The shift of the Great Horde Tatars to the west for the last time was to cause another general movement to take place. Many of the Trans-Yaik Tatars, called also Noghays also moved west under their Mankit princes. By 1508 one of their two Grand Princes (who as we have noted recognised Mengli Giray as Great Khan) was able to write that his pasture grounds were by the Volga. That same year Vassili III of Moscow inquired whether "all the Noghays are on this side of the Volga, or only some of them".[131] Many of these Noghays were to submit to the rulers of the Great Horde. Previously they had usually been subject to the Shibanid royal house.

The north-east Russian principalities under Moscow and the west Russian principalities (under Lithuania) had rarely suffered much from the Great Horde when it had been under the Namagan dynasty. Under that house the Great Horde had often been concentrated near the lower Volga – many months journey from the Russian principalities, due to the great river crossings involved in jouneying thither and the need to make detours since the Tatars' beasts required regular water and forage. Under the Tuka-Timurids, as well as the Crimean based Mamay Kiat, the Great Horde lay frequently much closer to the Russian lands. This proximity was felt. Moscow thrice destroyed and many scores of great raids from the last quarter of the fourteenth century until the eighteenth century.

I will not speculate here about the significance of 1502 for the Ottoman Empire. I find the literature on the Ottoman-Great Horde

[129] King Aleksandr understood that Mengli Giray intended to obtain for his son-in-law (the Ottoman royal prince and governor of Kaffa) the Ottoman throne upon the death of Bayezid: Papee, *Akta,* 449.

[130] According to B.D.Grekov, *Ocherki istorii SSSR. Period feodalizma IX-XV vv.*, part 2 (Moscow, 1953), 440.

[131] Karpov, PsMK, II, 7, 12.

relationship peculiar, partly because it has shouldered the burden of Christian historiography of the Tatars. Perhaps Ottoman and Turkish accounts of the Great Horde after 1502 must be approached in the same critical light as we approach Ottoman accounts of the history of the Habsburg Empire. Do they square with western histories of the "Kings of Vienna"? And do Ottoman accounts of the Great Horde square with Great Horde documents?

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In conclusion, the Great Horde was not destroyed in 1502. The historians who say it was destroyed lack the authority of its Great Khan, its ex-khan, the contemporary rulers of Poland (Aleksandr) and Moscow (Ivan III) and numerous others who knew that it was not destroyed but taken over, again. Whoever makes a bizarre construction of this event and suggests that in taking over the Great Horde its new khan somehow destroyed it is saying, in effect, that the Great Horde was destroyed (so that "its name never arose again") on a score of occasions from the late fourteenth century onwards, because it was taken over on divers occasion by rival royal princes. Whoever uses the pejorative word "claimed" e.g., "Mengli Giray and his heirs claimed to rule the Great Horde" is saying truer than he knows: Mengli Giray "claimed" to rule the Great Horde as Ivan III "claimed" to rule Moscow; he claimed to rule it because he did rule it.